

May 14, 2013

Mr. Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
Council President Nancy Navarro
Montgomery County, MD

Re: City of Rockville Comments on the Draft Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan (CTCFMP)

Dear Mr. Leggett and Council President Nancy Navarro,

The Mayor and Council of Rockville, the City's Planning Commission, the Traffic and Transportation Commission, and City Staff have received the draft Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan (CTCFMP) and presentations from Montgomery County Planning Staff on the report's conclusions. We are submitting comments to the Montgomery County Planning Board, but are also offering the following comments to you.

The City supports the concept of increased public transportation options in the County and region. We recognize that the CTCFMP's central purpose is to identify optimum routes for a future system and also identify the rights of way that will be necessary to support them. However, our review of the CTCFMP has raised concerns that go beyond the Plan's recommendations and these are detailed below.

Our three overarching concerns are:

1. The timeframe for this plan process has been much too tight, and we do not believe that sufficient time has been allowed either for public input or for a full analysis by either staff or public officials. As there is much future planning to be done for this overall initiative, we urge that sufficient time be given in all steps for coordination with municipalities and gathering public input.
2. We urge that the coordination with municipalities be detailed and meaningful. This is particularly important for Rockville because of our authority over land use and because of the three new transit corridors proposed in the city, which converge in the land-constrained area of the Rockville Metro Station.
3. We are concerned about how the system will be financed and the potential impacts of various options on residents and businesses.

Of more central concern about the broader initiative, the City does not see that there is agreement as to the primary purpose of the system. Our view, from many different observations, is that some see the system as an upscale local bus service and others see it as a way to move large numbers of people rapidly over large distances. There is a tension between these two purposes that should be resolved.

It is unclear to the City how County elected officials and County and State Agencies will arrive at their decisions. Such a process necessarily involves questions of land use, coordination of transit alternatives, and funding. The City encourages a more explicit County process, with lines of authority and responsibility clearly established. The City and other municipal stakeholders must be involved in this process.

Draft: Mark Pierzchala, May 6, 2013, for discussion.
(Amended by City staff as per discussion of May 6.)

Attachment B

The County should prioritize among the 12 routes and work to establish the first 2 or 3 routes as optimally as possible. It is probable that these early routes would be on state highways and it is necessary to get these projects into the state's planning pipeline as soon as possible.

Our letter of testimony to the Montgomery County Planning Board is attached for your review. That letter includes comments from our Planning Commission and the Traffic and Transportation Commission.

Yours,

Mayor and Council of Rockville

Cc:

Attachments: